Hearing Loss Awareness Month: Thriving with Hearing Loss Through Self-Advocacy, Communication Access, Technology, and Resources

May 2023
Overview of Hearing Loss

In North Carolina, more than 1.2 million people ages 18 and older have hearing loss.
- 30% of those ages 65-74
- 50% of those ages 75 and older

Research indicates untreated hearing loss increases the risk of falls as well as developing dementia.¹

A few health comorbidities with hearing loss include diabetes, cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, and depression.²,³

People over the age of 50 and those with serious health conditions should have regular professional hearing evaluations.

Excessive noise and certain medications can increase the risk of hearing loss⁴

Hearing loss is the leading combat-related disability among military veterans⁵

SOURCES: 1. (The Hidden Risks of Hearing Loss), 2. (Hearing Loss and Associated Comorbidities), 3. (Chronic Kidney Disease and Hearing Loss), 4. (Medications that Contribute to Hearing Loss), 5. (VA research on Hearing Loss)
Thrive with Hearing Loss: Self-Advocacy

A few laws that protect your rights at work, medical appointments, school, public places, etc. are: Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

- Use communication tips and share with others
- Request accommodations
- Plan ahead for events (i.e. call the theater to ask if they have hearing assistive technology available)
- Use Hearing Assistive Technology, hearing aids, and/or assistive listening devices
- Ask for clarification when information is not heard
- Celebrate successes by providing positive feedback

See also: Self-Advocacy for Hard of Hearing
Thrive with Hearing Loss Through Communication Access in Healthcare

Telehealth use has increased and patients that are Hard of Hearing often do not have the communication accommodations needed for successful visits.

You have the **right to communication access**.

Know the types of **communication strategies** that work best for your needs.

**Technology** can be used to improve access.

Check out the DSDHH Telehealth [webpage here](#).
Use Technology to Thrive with Hearing Loss

Users often achieve easier communication.\(^6\)

Some experience easier communication in noise.\(^6\)

Hearing rehabilitation helps some users get more benefit from hearing aids.\(^6,7\)

Less likely to report loneliness and depression.\(^8,9\)

May reduce sound exposure that might lead to brain atrophy.\(^10\)

Early research suggests hearing aids can slow cognitive decline.\(^8,9\)

These are several popular apps which are available on Apple or Android devices to provide captions for mobile phone calls.

- Caption Call
- InnoCaption
- CaptionMate
- Hamilton CapTel
- ClearCaptions
- Olelo

NCDHHS does not promote specific companies or apps, but these are a few suggestions that might work for you. It is recommended that you try different apps to see which one meets your needs. Other apps available to assist with your communication can be found here Mobile Apps.
Why Wait?

On average, the time between someone noticing hearing loss and getting help for it is 7 Years.

Meanwhile,

- VETERANS are 30% more likely than nonveterans to have severe hearing loss.
- THE TOP service-related injuries are tinnitus and hearing loss.
- HEARING LOSS is linked to anxiety, depression and more.

LEARN MORE ncdhhs.gov/divisions/services-deaf-and-hard-hearing

SOURCES: 11. (Do You Think You Have Hearing Loss), 12. (Geographic Disparities in US Veterans’ Access to Cochlear Implant Care Within the Veterans Health Administration System), 5. (VA Research on Hearing Loss)

NCDHHS, Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Hearing Loss Resources

• For additional information & services regarding hearing loss, contact your local DSDHH Regional Center

• Sign up for DSDHH events calendar and The Link newsletter

• DSDHH Telehealth Guidance and Resources

• Self Advocacy for Hard of Hearing Resource

• Veterans Hearing Loss Resources

• For information on programs and agencies that improve community health: Healthy Aging NC

Check us out on Facebook:  
Check out our website:
Works Cited

1. The Hidden Risks of Hearing Loss
2. Hearing Loss and Associated Comorbidities: What Do We Know?
3. Chronic Kidney Disease and Hearing Loss
4. Medications that Contribute to Hearing Loss
5. VA Research on Hearing Loss
6. Hearing Aid Benefits and Limitations
7. Aural Rehabilitation
8. Health Benefits of Hearing Aids
9. Untreated Hearing Loss Linked to Loneliness and Isolation for Seniors
11. Do You Think You Have Hearing Loss
12. Geographic Disparities in US Veterans’ Access to Cochlear Implant Care Within the Veterans Health Administration System